491 builds bridges, but as they are made exclusively with materials found in the country, forked sticks and beams covered with pounded earth, the first swelling of the water carries the whole structure away, and after a heavy rain one must wait for the waters to subside and resort to ferrymen who justifiably charge for their work.

481 The ferrymen proceed as follows. The person who wishes to cross
484 holds on to a thick beam, a gourd, or a simple clay jar, which holds
501 him out of the water; sometimes two large sticks under his arms serve as a life belt. In a few places rafts are available, made of sticks connected with séko and covered with dry grass. The ferryman swims next to him and prevents him from being carried too far by the current. At certain favored fords near the French posts, ferryboats are available.
484 Livestock swim across, and the ferryman holds their muzzles out of the water to prevent them from drowning. These crossings take a long time and add up to considerable expense, and animals are often carried away by the current or snatched by crocodiles. Woe to the man who dispenses with ferrymen, if he is not familiar with the bottom of the river and the strength of the current! He often drowns, and those whose aid he scorned do nothing to help him. On the other hand, if the caravans postpone their departure for too long, the rivers will be dry, the grass burned off, and the animals will die of hunger or thirst, or they will arrive at the markets exhausted and lean and will sell poorly.

These journeys thus entail a number of hazards; in addition, although imported goods sell high, living expenses run equally high, and if a profit is to be made, one cannot grow fat along the way. He will make up for it when he returns to the village.

442 The need for middlemen brings other hazards. Lt. Marc, who was well qualified to discuss the subject because he was twice in command of the Léo Post, described the situation as follows: "The livestock upon arrival is bought by interpreter-brokers, middlemen between the butchers and the meat merchants, to whom the caravaneers are practically forced to resort. These men buy all the kola nuts brought by the forest natives and control the market prices... These interpreter-brokers apparently speculate on livestock in a most curious way. They have scouts who go out to meet the caravans, sometimes two days' march to the north. /61/ These scouts attempt to alarm the cattle owners with tendentious remarks, until they are willing to cede their herds at a low price. Sometimes, at the height of the business season, in January and February, livestock prices may fluctuate by one

442 hundred percent within a few weeks. The Mandé-Dioula vie in eloquence, the Yarsé and Mossi in politeness, the Haoussa in friendliness. In fact, with exclusively native methods, this is a trading center in embryo, a veritable stock exchange." (4)

4. Marc, Au pays des Mossi /In Mossi Country/, p. 173.

484 The traders travel in all directions. The roads most commonly
487 followed are those which run from Ouagadougou south to the Gold Coast, to Gambaga, Daboya, Salaga, Kintampo, Sékondi; from Léo through Oua and Salaga; and from Tenkodogo through Bitou to rejoin the Gambaga road. Contact also occurs, though less frequently, with German Togoland and the markets of Sansané-Mango and even Lomé on the coast.

439 These two British and German colonies are supplied with livestock and native fabrics by the Mossi. They completely lack butcher's meat, for the tsetse fly does not permit cattle to survive within the confines of the rain forest. Imported fabrics do not withstand a few washings, so the native fabric strips, although less bright in color, are preferred by the Gourounsi and forest dwellers. They formerly wore only a sheep or goat skin, but they have taken to clothes since the arrival of the Europeans. Their scant clothing does not embarrass them when they are among themselves, but they are ashamed when Europeans see them. The Mossi bring back from their journeys the kola nuts which are the basis of their import trade, but they also bring copper, European goods of all sorts, fabrics usually of inferior quality, matches, perfumes, pearls, sugar, and basins of all shapes and kinds. Trade is very active in the coastal areas, and Lt. Marc writes on the subject as follows: "The Gold Coast administration, which commands a network of posts denser than ours, recorded in 1904 and 1905 about 16,000 beeves and 75,000 sheep or goats coming from Mossi country. Considering that the Mossi also supply in part the Togoland markets and the Boudoukou market, their annual export may be estimated at a minimum of 20,000 beeves and 100,000 sheep. Their kola nut imports amount to at least 500 tons." (5)

5. Marc, op. cit., p. 178.

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territory. This report is substantiated by Barth. Marc adds that the caravaneers had

> . . . a considerable amount of incidental expenses. Ten thousand kolas called for two asses or four porters for whom it was necessary to provide food during close to two months. Formerly there had been a certain number of local exactions to pay each time that the caravans crossed a new country. Now there are taxes on the caravans in the Gold Coast and also in French territory. It is also necessary to pay for ferryman who transports the livestock across the Volta [River]. There are risks, and occasionally cattle, fatigued by the trip, arrive in such bad shape that they are sold more cheaply than they had cost. Finally, the realization of profits is often difficult, the kola market being, in the commercial centers of the Mossi subject to considerable fluctuations at the time when the caravans return. (Marc 1909 : 174)[7]

Sometimes the caravaneers made extensive use of middlemen and did not realize all the profits. Marc, who was stationed at the customs post at Leo on the Mossi border with the Gold Coast, wrote:

> The livestock is bought upon arrival by interpreter-brokers, middlemen between the butchers and the meat merchants, to whom the caravaneers are practically forced to resort. These men buy all the kola nuts brought by the forest natives, and control the market prices . . . These interpreter-brokers apparently speculate on livestock in a most curious way. They have scouts who go out to meet the caravans, sometimes two days' march to the north. These scouts attempt to alarm the travellers with tendentious remarks, until they are willing to cede their herds at a low price. Some times, at the height of the business season—that is, in January and February—the livestock prices may fluctuate by one hundred per cent within a few weeks. The Mande-Dioula vie in eloquence, the Yarse and Mossi in politeness, the Hausa in friendliness. In reality, there is here, an embryonic trading center, a veritable stock exchange, using extensively indigenous methods. ((Marc 1909 : 175)

According to most reports, all the larger market centers of Mossi country were like this.

Caravan centers, like all the lesser market centers in Mossi country, provided merchants not only with trading opportunities but also with occasions for conviviality after hectic days of travel. At Dakay, south of Wagadougou, livestock traders found musicians, singers, and the most beautiful dancers in the country. And according to Marc, during the whole caravan season the market was abundantly furnished with beer (Marc 1909 : 175). But if the Mossi enjoyed themselves at

(7) Tauxier (1912 : 589) states that each porter was paid 35 francs for the thirty-five days of travels or at the rate of one franc per day. In addition a caravaneer spent about 300 cowries a day on food for each of his bearers.